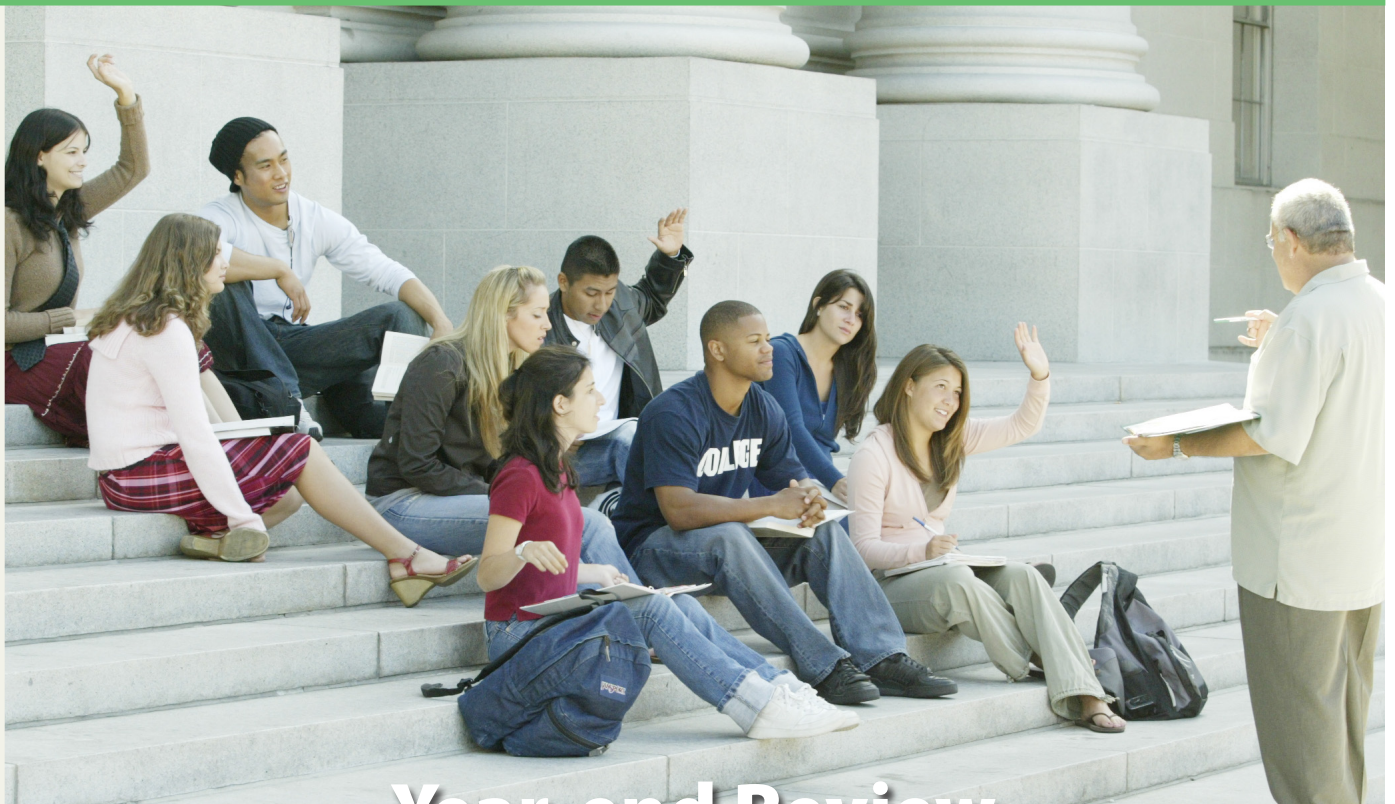


Fast Blast

Special Edition

December 11, 2007



Year-end Review

Our Mission

"Make education beyond high school financially accessible to all Californians"



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December 2007 Fast Blast – Year-end Review

This edition of the Fast Blast provides an update on the California Student Aid Commission's programs and activities for 2007. As we head into the holiday season, it is always a good time to review our activities for the past year to reflect on the things we've done well and look at ways of doing things even better in the coming year. As you read through the following summary, please know

that my staff and I are continually working to improve the services we provide to our primary constituents, California's students, as well as our many valued partners and stakeholders.

I would like to thank everyone who assists the California Student Aid Commission as we strive to "make education beyond high school financially accessible to all Californians."



May you all have very Happy Holidays and a safe and joyous New Year!

Financial Aid Programs

Cal Grants

Fall Cal Grant payments were issued later than usual this year because of the State Budget



impasse. Once the Budget was passed and signed by the Governor on August 24, Commission staff expedited processing the fall term portion of the \$810 million appropriated for the Cal Grant program for approximately 266,000 students. Most schools received the Cal

Grant funds within a week of the Budget signing.

California Community College Transfer Entitlement Awards (E2)

The maximum age for the California Community College Cal Grant Transfer Entitlement Award was increased to include those students who have not reached age 28 by December 31 of the award year. These students must also certify they graduated from a California high school after June 30, 2000 by completing the Transfer Entitlement Certification form (G-6).

Assumption Programs of Loans for Education (APLE)

The Commission provided approximately 6,000 of the 7,400 APLE awards to students

nominated by the participating institutions for the 2006-07 academic year. For the 2007-08 academic year, there are 8,000 awards available. Commission staff encourages all participating

continued on p.3

In This Issue:

- Financial Aid Programs
- Grant Delivery System
- Student Services
- School Support Services
- Public Awareness
- News from the Capitol
- CSAC: Administrative Matters

Financial Aid Programs (continued from p. 2)

institutions to submit applications for their eligible students to reach the authorized allocation of 8,000. For more information, please call the Commission's Specialized Programs Operations Branch at 1-888-224-7268, option #3.

State Nursing Assumption Programs of Loans for Education (SNAPLE)

The SNAPLE for Nursing Faculty program awarded 62 of the 100 awards available for academic year 2006-07. Another 100

awards are authorized for the 2007-08 academic year.

The SNAPLE for Nurses of State Facilities program had 40 awards available for 2006-07 and made awards to all five of those who applied, with 100 awards authorized for the 2007-08 academic year.

National Guard Assumption Program of Loans for Education (NGAPLE)

In academic year 2006-07 all 100 authorized awards were made (the Commission received 180

applications for the award) and no new awards were authorized for the 2007-08 academic year.

California Chafee Grant Program (Chafee)

The Commission awarded all available Chafee funds to eligible foster youth students for the 2007-08 academic year. A total of \$13.7 million was offered to 2,880 students.

Grant Delivery System: Phase II Real-time Database Development

The Grant Delivery System (GDS) Service Oriented Enhancements Project has already resulted in the Commission making the core changes that provide the foundation for implementing real-time transactions for WebGrants. The next phase of the project will provide all schools with an enhanced ability to acquire, update and reconcile grant information in real time using WebGrants. The system will also provide a new Web service interface to automate

transfer of Grade Point Average (GPA), award and payment data and provide real time information to students on grant awards and payments.

Currently, a Commission project team is working to implement the next phase of the GDS project. A project advisory committee was established to ensure the Commission gathers the requirements and needs for the schools, institutions and students. The advisory committee currently has 39 post-

secondary institution, high school and Financial Aid vendor representatives. Although the advisory committee has begun meeting, membership is still open and new members are encouraged to join and participate.

Student Services

Interactive Voice Response (IVR)

We have updated the IVR by adding more seasonal messages



that help answer the callers' questions before a representative handles the call. This reduces the Student Support call volume.

Currently the IVR system is being updated with:

- The addition of five new telephone lines and
- The addition of a new "EZ Route" system. In lieu of receiving a busy signal, students will now receive a customized message, which includes seasonal updates.

WebGrants for Students

More than 86,000 students have established a WebGrant account; 51,096 were created in the past year. WebGrants for Students

now allows students to post their leaves of absence on-line 24-hours a day, seven-days-a-week.

Staff are working on allowing students access to reset their user names and/or passwords on-line. Commission staff also continue to enhance this system.

E-mails

Student Support Services added auto-response messages to automatically respond to common questions that we receive from students via e-mail.

School Support Services

Training 2007

The Commission provided GPA Upload training to financial aid administrators and counselors in January and February. More than 400 Cal Grant Administrators participated in the Commission's Beginning and Advanced Cal Grant workshops in May and June. In October we provided Web conference training for about 30 new community college financial aid directors and held six High School Counselor Workshops at California State Universities with attendance ranging from 100 to 200 people per site.

During October and November we offered our Fall Cal Grant Workshops, attended by about 620 college financial aid administrators. In addition, Commission staff provided 15 special request training sessions for schools with specific needs.

Institutional Participation Agreement (IPA)

In September, the Commission approved a four-year Institutional Participation Agreement (IPA), which takes effect with the 2008-09 academic year. The IPA is the contract between the California Student Aid Commission and institutions participating in the Cal Grant program. The IPA contains the following changes:

- California Residency – Public institutions will apply the California residency determination dates already required by their governing boards to determine the residency status of their Cal Grant recipients.

continued on p. 5

School Support Services (continued from p. 4)

Non-public institutions may use the start date of the term for which the student is first enrolled as a Cal Grant recipient, or the Commission's date for the preliminary awarding of the Cal Grant as their residency determination date for Cal Grant purposes. Non-public institutions may also adopt community college regulations, or develop and document their own policy which is consistent with the community college regulations and California Education Codes.

- Separate Accounts – Institutions have a choice of commingling funds or maintaining them in a separate account.
- Security – Participating institutions are required to ensure they have strict security measures to protect students' confidential information.
- High School Graduation – The Commission is working on identifying business requirements to establish a central repository of

high school graduation confirmations.

The Commission wishes to thank all those involved in negotiating the current IPA, who spent countless hours meeting with us to achieve this important milestone. Their efforts are greatly appreciated.

Public Awareness



The Commission continued its year-round messaging efforts in a number of ways.

Public Awareness Campaign

During the 2006-07 academic year approximately 4,500 College Cash Boxes were sent to high schools and financial aid administrators. The Commission placed radio and television ads that made approximately 43 million media impressions, or hits, with young people in the 17- to 19-year-old range (many students heard or saw the ads multiple times).

We aired more than 266 TV spots on Univision stations in Southern and Northern California and orchestrated successful call-in programs in Los Angeles, San Diego and Fresno targeting Spanish-speaking audiences. There was also a successful English-language call-in program at the leading Sacramento-area TV station. We placed Internet banner ads that achieved more than 25 million online impressions.

We also launched the "Cash Crew," a peer-to-peer communications project involving former Cal Grant recipients, and received \$2 million in pro-bono advertising, thereby doubling the campaign's ad budget.

This year, Cash for College worked with the Public Awareness Campaign to re-design and print 130,000 new Personal Identification Number (PIN) cards, designed to encourage students to maintain a record of their PINs.

The College Cash boxes, featuring campaign collateral, were distributed to schools, financial aid administrators and other interested parties in November and December. This financial aid tool helps schools and local supporters aid students in applying for financial assistance including the Cal Grant programs.

continued on p. 6

Public Awareness (continued from p. 5)

The Commission staff worked with LA Cash for College to expand the College Cash Crew Program to help educate parents and students about the benefits of applying for financial aid. The expansion project will work on a more grassroots level to disseminate information about Cal

Grants to students and parents in major regions of the state. This peer-to-peer communications effort will be launched as a pilot in the Los Angeles area as part of the LA Cash for College Ambassador Scholarship program and will hopefully be expanded on a statewide basis. The L.A.

program will offer 24 Cash Crew Ambassadors a \$3,500 scholarship to serve throughout the year disseminating the Cash for College message in priority high schools, local community groups, faith-based and non-profit organizations.



CASH FOR C//LLEGE

Cash for College

The California Cash for College (CCFC) program was bolstered by the passage of Assembly Bill 1540 this year, establishing it as a state program under the administration of the Commission in partnership with private businesses and industry, and local community and education organizations.

The partnership effort links high schools with campuses, financial aid professionals, outreach and community groups to provide multi-lingual, hands-on financial aid application assistance to low income and first generation college-bound students and their families to apply for Cal Grants and other financial aid.

This fall, Cash for College helped develop and fund printing of the new 2008 Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) PIN card, and piloted PIN labs

and outreach events in targeted areas of the state to help students and parents apply early for PINs in advance of applying for financial aid. The PIN is used to electronically sign the FAFSA, which is critical as more and more FAFSA submissions are completed online.

Last year, campuses, high schools, regional offices and community groups conducted more than 400 workshops, a 50 percent increase over the previous year. This year, CCFC set up registration for 2008 workshops on the Calgrants.org Web site in early November, the earliest ever. Campuses, high schools and community groups can visit the Organizer pages of the www.calgrants.org website to register for 2008 workshops, order materials and access tools to assist them in conducting their activities. The 2008

workshops are posted online to the Workshop Locator page at www.calgrants.org so students and parents can find a location nearest them. More than 250 workshops have been registered so far.

The College Access Foundation of California (Foundation) in the next two years has committed to fund up to \$1.25 million in scholarships and scholarship program funding. The Foundation has already provided more than \$820,000 in funding over the past two years. This major commitment will allow the statewide effort to fund 500 scholarships in 2008, with up to two scholarships awarded at a qualifying workshop, based on number of returned evaluations. For more information, please visit the Workshop pages at www.calgrants.org.

California Student Opportunity and Access Program (Cal-SOAP)

Despite a 25 percent reduction in the 2007-2008 State Budget, Cal-SOAP continues to provide tutoring, mentoring and advising services to students throughout the state. Community partnerships in support of Cal-SOAP remain strong in the 15 regions where the program operates. This year, the Commission issued a Request for Proposal (RFP) to reestablish

Cal-SOAP services in the Solano area. Assuming a new regional group is successful in receiving a planning grant, we expect to establish a new consortium in the Solano area by April 2008. In addition to direct services to students at high school and college sites, Cal-SOAP also provides general financial aid and college access services in various community venues.



News from the Capitol

Budget Summary

The 2007-08 State Budget included \$810 million for the Cal Grant Program. Under this budget, Cal Grant maximum award amounts remain at their current levels. However, funding for Cal-SOAP was reduced by \$2.2 million. The Budget also contains funding for Assumption Programs for Loans for Education (APLE) and adds 100 awards for the State Nursing APLE programs. The Commission's operations budget of \$15.3 million was shifted from the Student Loan Operating Fund to the General Fund as a result of the pending sale of EDFUND.

EDFUND Sale Proposal

In May, the administration proposed the sale of EDFUND. Senate Bill 89 (Chapter 182, Statutes of 2007) authorizes the Department of Finance to contract with an advisor to assist with the sale. With the pending sale, the Commission is seeking appropriate resources to assume operations and services currently provided by EDFUND. These include information technology support, business and administrative services, and funds for the public awareness campaign and California Cash for College Program.

Legislative Update

During the last legislative session the Governor signed Assembly Bill 1540 into law, establishing Cash for College as a state program under the administration of the Commission in partnership with private businesses and industry, and local community and educational organizations.

The legislation, authored by Assembly Majority Leader Karen Bass and sponsored by the Los Angeles Area Chamber of Commerce, authorizes the Commission to allocate funds to accomplish the Cash for College Program goals including annual statewide workshops and outreach efforts that provide multi-lingual, hands-on financial aid application assistance to low-income and first generation students and their families to apply for Cal Grants and other postsecondary financial aid. The law also authorizes the Commission to accept cash and in-kind support from local private and community organizations for the Cash for College Program. We anticipate discovering and developing more creative partnerships with other public and private entities to help the Commission further its cause in helping California's students achieve their postsecondary education financing goals.

On the Horizon: Increased Partnerships

We are developing and furthering public relations and outreach partnerships with the Burton Foundation, the Wellness Foundation, GEAR UP, First 5 California and ScholarShare. Below is an update on each of these partnerships:

John Burton Foundation:

The Commission assisted with the John Burton Foundation for Children Without Homes this fall to provide more than \$100,000 to college-bound former foster children who were first-time Chafee grant recipients. The Burton Foundation is a nonprofit organization founded by former California State Senator John Burton and dedicated to improving the quality of life for homeless and foster youth.

First-year Chafee recipients were offered an additional helping hand through a \$100 gift card to help offset the cost of purchasing additional school supplies. The cards were distributed with the help of L.A. Cash for College and Wells Fargo Bank.

GEAR UP

Commission staff met with Gaining Early Awareness and Readiness for Undergraduate Programs (GEAR UP) members in November to renew its partnership with the program. The Commission administers \$2,000 educational trust awards for eligible middle-school students for outstanding student performance under the federal program. The awards are held in trust in the State's ScholarShare Program and accumulate interest until withdrawn for postsecondary education use.

California Wellness Foundation

The Commission joined forces this year with the California Wellness Foundation and its "Make It In Scrubs" campaign to educate high school students, high school graduates and under-represented minority students about opportunities in California's allied health care system. The Commission's Cal Grant and California Cash for College programs were cross-promoted during the Make It In Scrubs public education media bus tour in Southern California. In addition, Wellness Foundation cards are included in the current version of the College Cash Box and a link to its home page is provided on the Cal Grant Web site.

ScholarShare

The Commission and the State Treasurer's office, which administers the ScholarShare 529 College Savings Plan, are exploring ways to promote ScholarShare, including working with other agencies to encourage more families to start saving for college earlier. The Commission has already made contact with First 5 California regarding a tie-in with ScholarShare and the Commission to get out early college saving messages.

CSAC: ADMINISTRATIVE MATTERS

Reorganization of the Program and Administration Services Division

Catalina Mistler was named the new chief of the Program Administration and Services Division (PASD) in February. Ms. Mistler, a 25-year Commission staff veteran, served most recently as manager of Specialized Programs and Student Support. Two new units were formed and the division is now made up of the following:

- Student Support Services
- School Support Services
- Grant Operations
- Specialized Programs
- Business Services Integration
- Policy and Program Development